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ABSTRACT

This paper discusses an approach to multicultural education aimed at sensitizing teachers and teacher trainees to diverse cultural patterns. This approach, which is called "Functional Multicultural Education", uses literary writings to emphasize awareness of the levels of cultural differences, both overt and pervasive, that exist in a pluralistic society. It involves an attitude change that results from conscious involvement and participation in a particular culture using literary materials. One of the techniques used to effect this kind of education is the "Literary Grid." This is used to identify the cultural elements in a given text using a matrix of six factors that determine the nature of the cultural elements in the text and identify how the cultural characteristics have been expressed. This technique is supplemented by the Rosenberg Inventory for evaluating cultural content of textbooks. Two learning modules are appended as well as references and Rosenberg's inventory for evaluating the treatment of minority groups and women in learning materials. (JD)

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FUNCTIONAL MULTICULTURAL EDUCATION:

Theory and Practice

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Paper presented at the ATE Annual Meeting
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FUNCTIONAL MULTICULTURAL EDUCATION: THEORY AND PRACTICE

This paper (which includes two modules in the appendix) discusses an approach to multicultural education aimed at sensitizing teachers and teacher trainees to diverse cultural patterns. This approach which is called **Functional Multicultural Education** uses literary writings to teach cultural awareness and sensitize teachers to cultural diversity.

Banks (1970) suggested that schools should assist students to develop **ethnic literacy**, but the schools have been derelict in carrying this out. What is overlooked in a pluralistic society like the United States is that the school tends to be controlled by the dominant culture which often disdains minority cultures. As a result, cultural minorities have often found their cultural characteristics demeaned and rejected by the school, and this in turn tends to create an endemic condition of physical and psychological failure among these groups. Secondly, this process of demeaning and rejection further entrenches ethnocetricism in the society.

Multicultural Education

The initial approaches to cultural diversity included the "melting pot" concept, the cultural pluralism approach which led to the ethnic studies syndrome of the 1960s and more recently, the multicultural approach. It must be noted, however, that both the pluralistic and multicultural approaches for dealing with cultural diversity recognize the significance of the Anglo culture, but they also give weight to the existence and impact of

the other cultures in American society. However, whereas the multicultural approach is inclined toward cultural integration, the pluralistic approach is inclined toward cultural separatism.

Thus, it is only multicultural education which, because of its emphasis on cultural integration, can serve as the mechanism for breaking the bonds of ethnocentricism and prejudice while at the same time fostering cultural awareness. Multicultural education should therefore be seen as an educational imperative. It is in pursuit of this educational imperative that **Functional Multicultural Education** is being proposed as a way of sensitizing individuals, especially teachers, to diverse cultures.

Functional Multicultural Education

Definition

Functional Multicultural Education is an active process for sensitizing teachers and teacher trainees in a pluralistic society to the cultural diversities existing in that society. The emphasis in functional multicultural education is on the awareness of the levels of cultural differences, both overt and pervasive, that exist in that society. It involves an attitude change that results from conscious involvement and participation in a culture using literary materials.

Assumptions

The following assumptions underlie functional multicultural education :

1. People will be willing to change as long as change is not threatening to them.

2. There is inherent strength in diversity, and it is the duty of society to tap this strength and resource.

3. Cultural pluralism is a reality in most societies and consequently, a process for enhancing people's understanding of diversities is essential

4. Teachers need to be sensitized to the diverse cultures in the society in order to enhance their effectiveness to function in the classroom.

5. A teaching technique designed to sensitize teachers to multiculture in the classroom can improve the academic performance of school children, as well as, increase their self-concept and self-respect.

6. Active and experiential participation in a process for sensitizing teachers and students to cultural diversities is an educational imperative because of its potential to enhance the academic climate for both teaching and learning.

Essential Skills/Competencies

The following skills and attitudes which should be emphasized in multicultural education are ensured by functional multicultural education. Teachers and teacher trainees have the opportunity to develop the following competencies through the use of functional multicultural education :

1. The ability to empathize with other cultures

2. An understanding of the nature of other cultures

3. A positive attitude of acceptance, respect and appreciation for other cultures

4. The ability to assist young people in understanding and confronting feelings of other ethnic groups

5. Skills in evaluating materials dealing with other cultures

6. An awareness of the importance of overcoming cultural and racial stereotyping

7. An awareness of the interdependence needed among the various cultures for the enrichment of life in a pluralistic society

Theoretical Framework

The theoretical base of functional multicultural education is what the writer calls the convergence theory (Appendix 1). This theory postulates that, in spite of diversity, cultures in a pluralistic society tend to converge. The points of convergence are culture universals (culture elements common to humanity) at one end and collective culture (culture elements common to a society) at the other end. Essentially, the theory emphasizes the concept of unity in diversity. This concept is a modification of D.H.Lawrence's theme of unity in duality : a love motif in which two lovers insist on their individuality, their separateness, while at the same time remaining inextricably a part of each other. John Donne's compass metaphor in " A Valediction Forbidding Mourning" very aptly captures the essence of unity in duality - for, while the two legs of a pair of compasses remain distinctly separate, each needs the other in order to describe a circle. According to this theory then, the separateness, the distinctive individuality, is even essential in order to achieve unity of being. What this theory does for functional multicultural education is to stress the need to look beyond cultural differences; the need to see cultural differences as the strands that intertwine to produce the whole, and therefore,

inseparable parts of the whole.

Functional Multicultural Education : The Technique

Two techniques which complement each other are used to effect functional multicultural education. These are : the Literary Grid and the Rosenberg Inventory.

The Literary Grid

The Literary Grid is the invention of the writer. It uses literature or literary writings to sensitize teachers to cultural patterns or elements. Individuals are assigned reading material and are asked to use the Grid to identify the cultural elements in the given text. These are then discussed at length in class, and role played, if necessary.

The Grid consists of three vertical columns indicating three distinct cultural entities - culture specialty, collective culture and culture unversals. These three vertical factors run across two horizontal factors designated as "Implicit and Explicit", thereby creating a matrix of six factors (Appendix 2). These matrices are used to determine the nature of the cultural elements and identify how the cultural characteristics have been expressed in any type of literary work - drama, poetry, novels, and folklore. A cultural element so identified can be discussed as culture specialty, collective culture or culture universal, and it may be further explained in terms of being explicitly or implicitly stated. It must be pointed out that the application of the Grid is not limited by literary form, genre, period, nor by ethnicity, nationality, nor the human condition of the author. In

fact, the Grid is very promising with respect to its universal application.

This technique seeks to enhance teachers' understanding of cultural diversity in a pluralistic society with special reference to the classroom. The literature approach will enable teachers to experience a culture without necessarily having to live in that culture, thus, making the interaction very non-threatening.

The Modified Rosenberg Inventory

The second phase of functional multicutural education is the use of the Rosenberg Inventory to assess the cultural content of a text. This procedure serves to complement the use of the Literary Grid. The Modified Rosenberg Inventory consists of twenty criteria for evaluating the cultural/ethnic content of a text, especially, textbooks. In using the Rosenberg Inventory, teachers and teacher trainees merely indicate the existence or non-existence in the textbook of specified characteristics identified in the Inventory (Appendix 3).

The advantage in using both instruments is that the two techniques complement each other and consequently, enhance each other's ability to more effectively sensitize individuals to cultural elements in printed materials in ways that each technique by itself is not capable of accomplishing. The Grid emphasizes internal constraints - experiencing the culture vicariously and emotionally. The Rosenberg Inventory, on the other hand, deals with external factors - the physical presence or absence of specific cultural patterns or elements. The

application of the two techniques is therefore essential for achieving maximum effectiveness with functional multicultural education.

Significance of Functional Multicultural Education

The incorporation of literature into a resource for sensitizing teachers and teacher trainees to cultural elements and patterns holds promise for multicultural education. Literary works enable us to penetrate the surface of another culture. Novels, for instance, provide us with the most complete opportunity of "sympathetic immersion in a social fabric" while dramatic works enable us to gain insights into " cultural priorities" (Sharrad, 1982). Thus, Shakespearean plays offer us not just stories (tragedies, comedies, or histories), but also glimpses of life in Elizabethan England. In the works of Erskine Caldwell, Ann Moody, Richard Wright and William Faulkner, life in the deep South comes to life in all its colors. The Ananse folktales of Ghana and Jamaica reflect the world view and culture of the two societies. Similarly, Achebe's **Things Fall Apart**" and **The Arrow of God** are not just tragic stories of the protagonists, but the two novels also provide us with insights into Ibo culture. George Elliot and Thomas Hardy enable us to live and experience life in Victorian England with all its social hang-ups. W.B.Yeats and James Joyce suffuse us with Ireland, its people and culture. Similarly, E.M.Foster's **A Passage to India** makes us experience in an almost physical sense, India, its people and its many cultures.

Thus, properly used ,literary writings provide mirrors for

observing others, but unlike mirrors, they both lure and enable us to become immersed in the culture, and even sometimes become unwilling participants in that culture. It is this ability of literature to draw us into a culture and make us feel and live that culture which is its greatest asset as a mechanism for sensitizing teachers to cultural patterns that are different from their own, and thereby, helping them to appreciate and understand their own cultures better. Furthermore, Sharrad (1982) stresses that

> "Culture learning through literature .....enables us to build a multicultural outlook without the stresses and threats .... attendant upon actual immersion in another society". (p.8)

Conclusion

In our attempt to achieve multicultural education in a pluralistic society, many approaches have been tried and many more will be tried. This paper has sought to explain one more technique for sensitizing teachers to cultural diversities in a pluralistic society so as to enable them to function more effectively in a multicultural classroom.

This technique, referred to as **Functional Multicultural Education**, uses a Literary Grid, supplemented by the Rosenberg Inventory for evaluating cultural content of textbooks, to help teachers become culture sensitive.

It is hoped that functional multicultural education as espoused in this paper can help move multicultural education away from parochialism and ethnocentricism and make it a meaningful

and non-threatening vehicle for understanding other people and other cultures.

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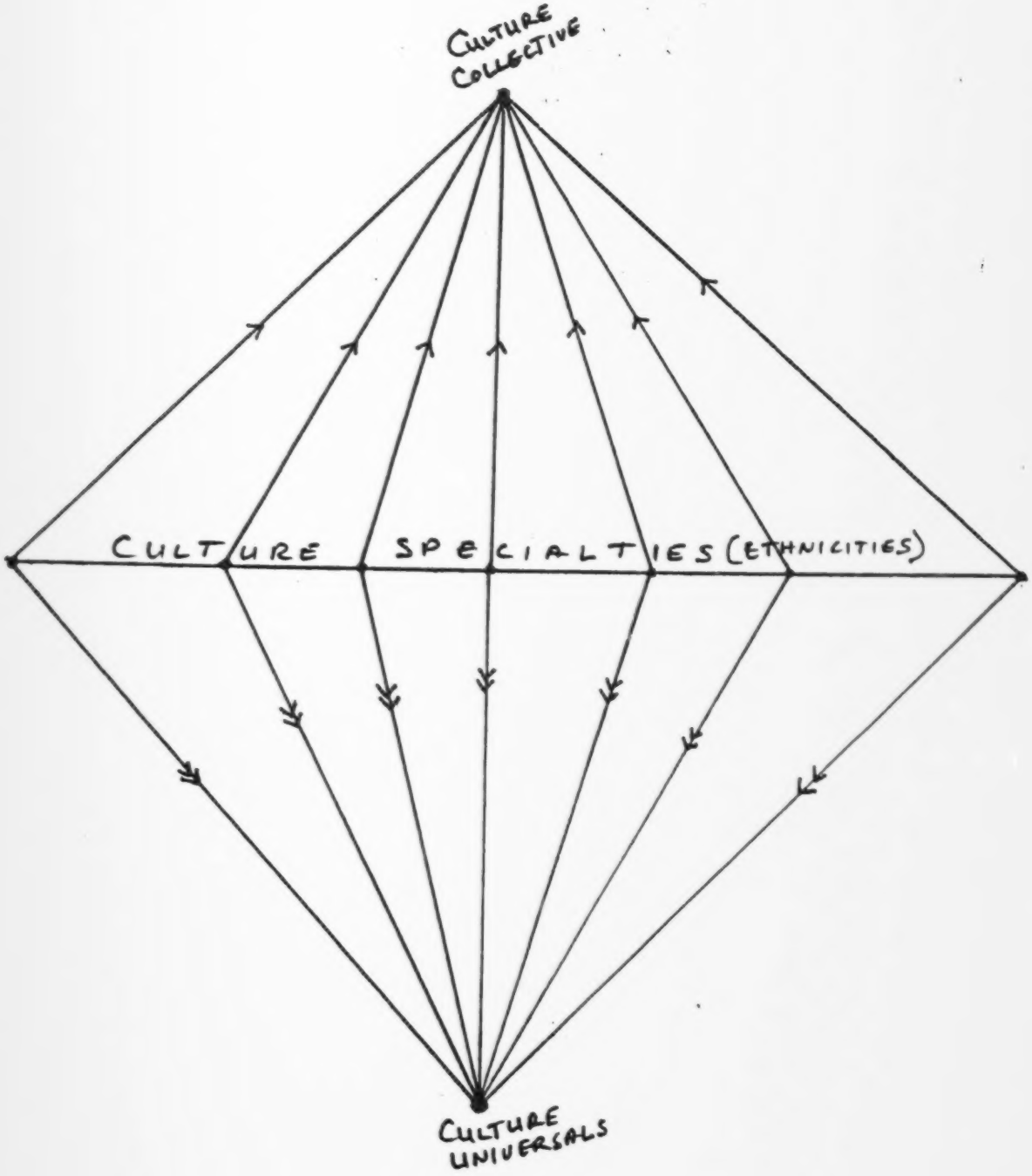
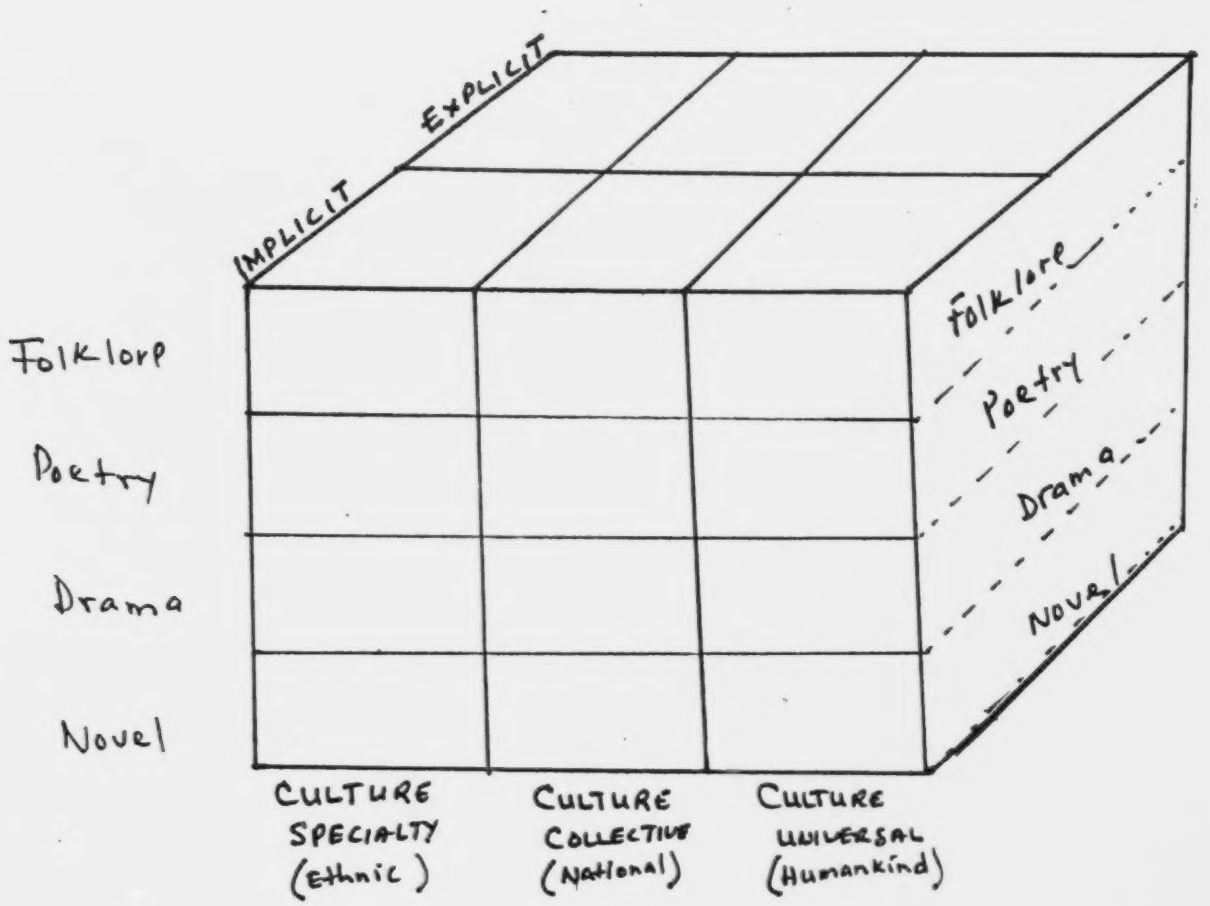
THE CONVERGENCE THEORY

APPENDIX 1



THE LITERARY GRID

APPENDIX 2



CRITERIA FOR EVALUATING THE TREATMENT OF MINORITY GROUPS AND WOMEN IN TEXTBOOKS AND OTHER LEARNING MATERIALS

APPENDIX 3

By: Max Rosenberg*

Does this textbook or learning material in both its textual content and illustrations: (Give Examples)

		Yes	No
1.	Evidence on the part of writers, artists, and editors a sensitivity to prejudice, to stereotypes, to the use of material which would be offensive to women or to any minority group?	____	____
2.	Avoid errors of omission or commission, overemphasis or underemphasis which result in inferences that any sexual, racial, religious, or ethnic segment of our population is more or less worthy, more or less capable, more or less important in the mainstream of American life?	____	____
3.	Utilize numerous opportunities for full, accurate, and balanced treatment of women and minority groups?	____	____
4.	Provide abundant recognition for women and minority groups by placing them frequently in positions of leadership and centrality ?	____	____
5.	Depict both male and female adult members of minority groups in situations which exhibit them as fine and worthy models to emulate?	____	____
6.	Present many instances of fully integrated human groupings and settings to indicate equal status and non-segregated social relationships?	____	____
7.	Make clearly apparent the group representation of individuals - Caucasian, Afro-American, Indian, Chinese, Mexican American, etc. - and not seek to avoid identification by such means as smudging some color over Caucasian facial features?	____	____
8.	Give comprehensive, broadly ranging, and well-planned representation to women and minority groups - in art and science, in history and mathematics and literature, and in all other areas of life and culture?	____	____

*From Eliminating Ethnic Bias in Instructional Materials, ASCD, 1974

		Yes	No
9.	Delineate life in contemporary urban environments as well as in rural or suburban environments, so that today's city children can also find significant identification for themselves, their problems and challenges, and their potential for life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness?	____	____
10.	Portray sexual, racial, religious, and ethnic groups in our society in such a way as to build positive images - mutual understanding and respect, full and unqualified acceptance, and commitment to ensure equal opportunity for all?	____	____
11.	Present social group differences in ways that will cause students to look upon the multi-cultural character of our nation as a value which we must esteem and treasure?	____	____
12.	Assist students to recognize clearly the basic similarities among all members of the human race, and the uniqueness of every single individual?	____	____
13.	Teach the great lesson that we must accept each other on the basis of individual worth, regardless of sex or race or religion or social economic background?	____	____
14.	Help students appreciate the many important contributions to our civilization made by members of the various human groups, emphasizing that every human group has its list of achievers, thinkers, writers, artists, scientists, builders, and political leaders?	____	____
15.	Supply an accurate and sound balance in the matter of historical perspective, making it perfectly clear that all racial and religious and ethnic groups have mixed heritages, which can well serve as sources of both group pride and group humility?	____	____
16.	Clarify the true historical forces and conditions which in the past have operated to the disadvantage of women and minority groups?	____	____
17.	Clarify the true contemporary forces and conditions which at the present operate to the disadvantage of women and minority groups?	____	____
18.	Analyze intergroup tension and conflict fairly, frankly, objectively, and with emphasis upon resolving our social problems in a spirit of fully implementing democratic values and goals in order to achieve the American dream for all Americans?	____	____

		Yes	No
19.	Seek to motivate students to examine their own attitudes and behaviors, and to comprehend their own duties and responsibilities as citizens in a pluralistic democracy-to demand freedom and justice and equal opportunity for every individual and for every group?	_____	_____
20.	Help minority group (as well as majority group) students to identify more fully with the educational process by providing textual content and illustrations which give students many opportunities for building a more positive self-image, pride in their group, knowledge consistent with their experience; in sum, learning material which offers students meaningful and relevant learning worthy of their best efforts and energies?	_____	_____

MODULES

MULTICULTURAL EDUCATION THROUGH LITERATURE

MODULE 1 : The Multicultural Dimension of Language Use

Purpose :

To increase students' knowledge and appreciation for cultural diversities and help them examine their own assumptions and values as members of a pluralistic society

Objectives- As a result of this module students should be able:

1. To discuss the universality of language
2. To discuss some of the common traits of languages
3. To discuss language use as a reflection of class rather than race
4. To discuss language as a cultural phenomenon

Structure and Organization :

1. Materials :

   Excerpts from Alice Walker's **Color Purple**

   Excerpts from Erskine Caldwell's **Tobacco Road**

   The Literary Grid

2. Activities and Assignments :

   1. Let the class discuss the two texts using the Literary Grid to outline the cultural elements inherent in language use.
   2. Let the class compare the two texts with two West African pidgin English texts to provide an insight into language variations.
   3. Let the class discuss the structural characrestics

of the four texts.

INSTRUCTIONS AND NOTES :

Adequate preparation is very essential in order to achieve maximum success with this model. The instructor must develop relevant questions that will enable students to focus on essential details and generate fruitful discussion. Students should be encouraged to be open with their own assumptions as well as question those assumptions. Sometimes it will be necessary for the instructor to provide more information on issues that are raised through the discussion.

Explanations and Notes :

Implicit - any implied or underlining cultural undertones; any cultural elements that are not overtly stated.

Explicit - any overtly stated cultural characteristic or element.

Culture Universals - cultural characteristics common to mankind.

Collective Culture - cultural characteristics common to a society or a people.

Culture Specialty - cultural characteristics common to a group of people or an ethnic group.

Guidelines :

The following should come out during the discussions :

Culture Universals:

All languages are characterized by language universals (Chomsky,1965)). All languages share the characteristics of

substantive universals and form universals. These include the existence in languages of nouns and verbs, on one hand, and the imposition of form on the language by grammar, on the other. The latter includes deep structures and surface structures. These then constitute the culture universals in this case.

Discussion :

The instructor may discuss deep structure and surface structure and show how similar these are in a number of languages.

Collective Culture:

A language may also have a distinctive feature of a country or a people. This is the mark of collective culture. The language of the two texts are distinctively American since the writers are Americans. This therefore raises the issue of language varieties. Note the explicitly stated words like "color", "gal", "cuss", which are very American.

Discussion:

Compare the two varieties of English - English English and American English, and contrast both of them with the samples of West African pidgin English.

Culture Specialty:

Culture specialty may be discussed from a geographic, ethnic, or socio-cultural perspective, so try to identify any regional, ethnic/group, or socio-cultural features.

As far as the two texts are concerned the following cultural specialties are evident :

Geographic :

regional - the south; note such features as "yall"

Ethnic/Group:

Black English; uneducated working class language variety

Socio-Cultural:

Social class features - Lower class language variety. Though the two writers deal with two ethnically different people we realize a greater degree of language similarities. These similarities are therefore attributable to class rather than race. Dale (1976) notes that many of the features of Black English are present in other southern dialects.

Discussion:

Discuss the structural characteristics of the language of the two texts. Note such features as the use of double negation, the omission of auxiliary verbs, the use of "be" structures, the structure of possessive forms, and the use of "aint".

nobody take the trouble to go and listen, if they did that."

"Maybe I don't know much about preaching, but I ain't never heard of nobody preaching about men wearing black shirts—against black shirts, at that. I ain't never seen a man wearing a black shirt, noway."

"Preachers has got to preach *against* something. It wouldn't do them no good to preach *for* everything. They got to be *against* something every time."

"I never looked at it that way before," Jeeter said, "but there might be a lot in what you say. Though, take for instance, God and heaven—you wouldn't preach *against* them, would you, Sister Bessie?"

"Good preachers don't preach about God and heaven, and things like that. They always preach *against* something, like hell and the devil. Them is things to be against. It wouldn't do a preacher no good to preach for God. He's got to preach against the devil and all wicked and sinful things. That's what the people like to hear about. They want to hear about the bad things."

"You sure is a convincing woman, Sister Bessie," he said. "God must be pretty proud of having a woman preacher like you. I don't know what He's going to think about Dude, though. Specially when he starts preaching *against* men wearing black shirts. I ain't never seen a man wearing

a black shirt, noway, and I don't believe there's such things in the country."

Jeeter bent over and rubbed his hands on the dent in the body of the car. He scraped the surface paint with his fingernails until most of it had peeled off and fallen on the ground.

"Stop doing that to my automobile," Bessie said. "Ain't you got no sense at all? You and Ada has near about got all the paint off of it already doing that."

"You wouldn't talk to me like that, would you, Bessie?" he asked. "I ain't hurting the automobile no more than it's already done."

"Well, you keep your hands off it, anyhow."

Jeeter slouched away and leaned against the corner of the house. He looked sharply at Bessie, saying nothing.

"I near about ruined my new automobile letting you fool with it," she said. "I ought to had better sense than to let you get near it. Hauling that load of blackjack to Augusta tore holes all in the back seat."

"You ain't going to take me riding in it none?" he asked, standing erectly by the house.

"No, sir! You ain't going to ride in my new automobile no more. That's why I wouldn't let you go with me to see Tom this morning. I don't want you around it no more, neither."

"By God and by Jesus, if that's what you're aiming to do, you can get off my land," he said.

lip sewed together, but he had not yet got around to doing it.

Dude picked up a piece of rotted weatherboard that had been knocked from the house and threw it at his father. He did not take his gaze from Ellie May and Lov, however. Their actions, and Ellie May's behavior, held him spellbound.

"What you want now, Dude?" Jeeter said. "What's the matter with you—chunking weatherboarding at me like that?"

"Ellie May's horsing," Dude said.

Jeeter glanced across the yard where Lov and Ellie May were sitting close together. The trunk of a chinaberry tree partly obscured his view of all that was taking place, but he could see that she was sitting on Lov's outstretched legs, astride his knees, and that he was offering her a turnip from the sack beside him.

"Ellie May's horsing, ain't she, Pa?" Dude said.

"I reckon I done the wrong thing by marrying Pearl to Lov," Jeeter said. "Pearl just ain't made up to be Lov's woman. She don't take no interest in Lov's wants, and she don't give a cuss what nobody thinks about it. She ain't the kind of gal to be a wife to Lov. She's queer. I reckon somehow she wants to be going to Augusta, like the other gals done. None of them ever was satisfied staying here. They ain't like me, because I think more of the land than I do about staying in a durn cotton mill. You can't smell no sedge fire up there,

and when it comes time to break the land for planting, you feel sick inside but you don't know what's ailing you. People has told me about that spring sickness in the mills, I don't know how many times. But when a man stays on the land, he don't get to feeling like that this time of year, because he's right here to smell the smoke of burning broom-sedge and to feel the wind fresh off the plowed fields going down inside of his body. So instead of feeling sick and not knowing what's wrong down in his body, as it happens in the durn mills, out here on the land a man feels better than he ever did. The spring-time ain't going to let you fool it by hiding away inside a durn cotton mill. It knows you got to stay on the land to feel good. That's because humans made the mills. God made the land, but you don't see Him building durn cotton mills. That's how I know better than to go up there like the rest of them. I stay where God made a place for me."

"Ellie May's acting like she was Lov's woman," Dude said.

Ada shifted the weight of her body from one foot to the other. She was standing in the same place on the porch that she had been when Lov first came into the yard. She had been watching Lov and Ellie May for a long time without looking anywhere else.

"Maybe God intended for it to be such," Jeeter said. "Maybe He knows more about it than us

Was a scandal, say Carrie.

He sure was, say Kate.

What you mean? say Carrie.

I mean he just brought her here, dropped her, and kept right on running after Shug Avery. That what I mean. Nobody to talk to, nobody to visit. He be gone for days. Then she start having babies. And she young and pretty.

Not so pretty, say Carrie, looking in the looking glass. Just that head of hair. She too black.

Well, brother must like black. Shug Avery black as my shoe.

Shug Avery, Shug Avery, Carrie say. I'm sick of her. Somebody say she going round trying to sing. Umph, what she got to sing about. Say she wearing dresses all up her leg and headpieces with little balls and tassles hanging down, look like window dressing.

My ears perk up when they mention Shug Avery. I feel like I want to talk about her my own self. They hush.

I'm sick of her too, say Kate, letting out her breath. And you right about Celie, here. Good housekeeper, good with children, good cook. Brother couldn't have done better if he tried.

I think about how he tried.

This time Kate come by herself. She maybe twenty-five. Old-maid. She look younger than me. Healthy. Eyes bright. Tongue sharp.

Buy Celie some clothes. She say to Mr. _____.

She need clothes? he ast.

Well look at her.

He look at me. It like he looking at the earth. It need somethin? his eyes say.

She go with me in the store. I think what color Shug

Avery would wear. She like a queen to me so I say to Kate, Somethin purple, maybe little red in it too. But us look an look and no purple. Plenty red but she say, Naw, he won't want to pay for red. Too happy lookin. We got choice of brown, maroon or navy blue. I say blue.

I can't remember being the first one in my own dress. Now to have one made just for me. I try to tell Kate what it mean. I git hot in the face and stutter.

She say. It's all right, Celie. You deserve more than this.

Maybe so. I think.

Harpo, she say. Harpo the oldest boy. Harpo, don't let Celie be the one bring in all the water. You a big boy now. Time for you to help out some.

Women work, he say.

What? she say.

Women work. I'm a man.

You're a trifling nigger, she say. You git that bucket and bring it back full.

He cut his eye at me. Stumble out. I hear him mutter somethin to Mr. _____ sitting on the porch. Mr. _____ call his sister. She stay out on the porch talking a little while, then she come back in, shaking.

Got to go, Celie, she say.

She so mad tears be flying every which way while she pack.

You got to fight them, Celie, she say. I can't do it for you. You got to fight them for yourself.

I don't say nothing. I think bout Nettie, dead. She fight, she run away. What good it do? I don't fight, I stay where I'm told. But I'm alive.

Dear God,

Harpo ast his daddy why he beat me. Mr. _____ say, Cause she my wife. Plus, she stubborn. All women good for—he don't finish. He just tuck his chin over the paper like he do. Remind me of Pa.

Harpo ast me, How come you stubborn? He don't ast How come you his wife? Nobody ast that.

I say, Just born that way, I reckon.

He beat me like he beat the children. Cept he don't never hardly beat them. He say, Celie, git the belt. The children be outside the room peeking through the cracks. It all I can do not to cry. I make myself wood. I say to myself, Celie, you a tree. That's how come I know trees fear man.

Harpo say, I love Somebody.

I say, Huh?

He say, A Girl.

I say, You do?

He say, Yeah. Us plan to marry.

Marry, I say. You not old enough to marry.

I is, he say. I'm seventeen. She fifteen. Old enough.

What her mama say, I ast.

Ain't talk to her mama.

What her daddy say?

Ain't talk to him neither.

Well, what *she* say?

Us ain't never spoke. He duck his head. He ain't so bad looking. Tall and skinny, black like his mama, with great big bug eyes.

Where yall see each other? I ast. I see her in church, he say. She see me outdoors.

She like you?

I don't know. I wink at her. She act like she scared to look.

Where her daddy at while all this going on?

Amen corner, he say.

How to speak English English

A number of English words are different from their American counterparts. If you think a bonnet is a hat, or don't know the difference between a saloon and a pub, read on...

AMERICAN ENGLISH	ENGLISH ENGLISH
apartment	flat
automobile hood	bonnet
fall	autumn
calendar	diary
call (on the telephone)	ring up
candy	sweet
collect call	reverse charges
cookie	biscuit
druggist or drug store	chemist(s)
elevator	lift
first floor	ground floor
four-door sedan	saloon
gasoline	petrol
gas station	filling station
hiking	trekking
hold on (the phone)	hang on
interstate highway	motorway
lawyer/attorney	solicitor/barrister
line (of people)	queue
make a reservation	book
movie theater	cinema
pants	trousers
rainboots	wellingtons
second floor	first floor
soccer	football
store	shop
subway	underground or tube
tavern	pub
tennis shoes	plimsoles
traffic circle	roundabout
truck	lorry
two weeks	fortnight
umbrella	brolly
vacation	holiday
wrench	spanner

Selected from Mother is Gold

Sometam I think about dis life
And de troubie blackman see;
Poor blackman, he must face big strife,
Or fall down on him knees,
When he must get some little good,
Or put for him belly scanty food

•

I give my blood and life for you,
But you no member me:
My heart be clean, my word be true,
My body no be free:
Why must my feet be in your chain
And you must chase me with your cane?

•

I no get gun, I no get bomb,
I no fit fight no more:
You bring your cross and make me dumb,
My heart get plenty sore,
You tell me close my eyes and pray,
Your brudder thief my land away.[1]

I done try go church, I done go for court
Dem all day talk about di 'new culture':
Dem talk about 'equality', dem mention 'divorce'
Dem holler am so-tay my ear nearly cut:
One wife be for one man.

•

My fader before my fader get him wife berku,
E no' get equality palaver; he live well
For he be oga for im own house,
But dat time done pass before white man come
Wit 'im
One wife for one man

•

Suppose, self, say na so-so woman your wife dey born
Suppose your wife sabe book, no'sabe make chop:
Den, how you go tell man make'e no' go out
Sake of dis divorce'. Bo', dis culture na waya O!
Wen one wife be for one man.[2]

1. Poem by Dennis Osadebay

2. Poem by Aig-Imoukhuede

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MULTICULTURAL EDUCATION THROUGH LITERATURE

MODULE 2 : Poetry

Purpose :

To increase students' knowledge of and appreciation for non-western cultures as well as enable these students to see the interrelatedness of cultures

Objectives - As a result of this module students should be able:

1. To discuss how literature reflects the feelings of people in different cultures
2. To give examples of universal human characteristics and needs which are expressed differently in different cultures
3. To identify factors which may unite people even though they live in different cultures
4. To explain a perspective or a development which may be the result of culture

Structure and Organization:

1. Materials:

   Poem - **"Abiku"** by Wole Soyinka

   The Literary Grid

2. Activities and Assignments:

   i. Let students try to interpret the poem; then using the Literary Grid, let them try to analyze the cultural content of the poem.

   ii. Discuss the the following : unversality of death, life and death as subjects of poetry, differences in

attitudes toward death, forms of burial, for example, cremation and embalming, and reincarnation.

iii. Let students bring to class poems dealing with the subject of death and compare them.

Instructions and Notes :

Some background knowledge of Nigeria and Yoruba society is necessary for a better appreciation of the poem and its subject matter since it deals with Yoruba traditional society.

The writer, Wole Soyinka, is a Nigerian born playwright and poet. His plays have been performed world wide and his poems translated into many languages. Wole Soyinka was awarded the Nobel prize in Literature in 1986.

Explanations and Notes:

Abiku - a Yoruba word for a spirit child with the tendency to die very young but return repeatedly to the same mother to be reborn again and again.

Cowries - the shells of some small sea snails of the oyster family which were also used as legal tenders in the olden days before money economies and alloy and paper currencies became common.

Guidelines

The following should come out of the discussions:

Culture Universals:

Universality of death, the belief in life and death, and a belief in reincarnation are to a large extent elements of culture

universals. The central message of the poem is the belief in reincarnation represented here by the Abiku who has the ability to die and reincarnate repeatedly through the same mother. Thus, the poem is also about life and death which are universal human attributes.

Collective Culture

Elements of regional and national culture include the branding of the Abiku so that he/she can be recognized the second time around.

The use of proverbs is a distinctive characteristic of African Languages. Note such proverbs as "I am the squirrel teeth" and "The ripest fruit was saddest".

Culture Specialty

Local Yoruba features of the Abiku myth may include the use of snail shell to brand the Abiku, putting bangles on the feet, and branding on the chest as opposed to some other place. In Ghana, for instance, only small marks are made on the cheeks. Sacrificing goats and cowries may also be Yoruba elements.

Discussion:

A discussion of the movie "Out On A Limb" can be used as a good introductory exercise. The Instructor and the students can do a line by line explanation of the poem after the general meaning has been grasped.

Assignment:

"Death in the Dawn" by Wole Soyinka

Abiku

Wole Soyinka

In vain your bangles cast
Charmed circles at my feet;
I am Abiku, calling for the first
And the repeated time.

Must I weep for goats and cowries
For palm oil and the sprinkled ash?
Yams do not sprout in amulets
To earth Abiku's limbs.

So when the snail is burnt in his shell
Whet the heated fragment, brand me
Deeply on the breast. You must know him
When Abiku calls again.

I am the squirrel teeth, cracked
The riddle of the palm. Remember
This, and dig me deeper still into
The god's swollen foot.

Once and the repeated time, ageless
Though I puke. And when you pour
Libations, each finger points me near
The way I came, where

The ground is wet with mourning
White dew suckles flesh-birds
Evening befriends the spider, trapping
Flies in wind-froth;

Night, and Abiku sucks the oil
From lamps. Mothers! I'll be the
Suppliant snake coiled on the doorstep
Yours the killing cry.

The ripest fruit was saddest;
Where I crept, the warmth was cloying.
In the silence of webs, Abiku moans, shaping
Mounds from the yolk.

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Death in the Dawn — Wole Soyinka

Traveller, you must set out
At dawn. And wipe your feet upon
The dog-nose wetness of the earth.

Let sunrise quench your lamps. And watch
Faint brush pricklings in the sky light
Cottoned feet to break the early earthworm
On the hoe. And shadows stretch with sap
Not twilight's death and sad prostration.
This soft kindling, soft receding breeds
Racing joys and apprehensions for
A naked day. Burdened hulks retract,
Stoop to the mist in faceless throng
To wake the silent markets – swift, mute
Processions on grey byways. . . .

On this
Counterpane, it was –
Sudden winter at the death
Of dawn's lone trumpeter. Cascades
Of white feather-flakes . . . but it proved
A futile rite. Propitiation sped
Grimly on, before
The right foot for joy, the left, dread
And the mother prayed, Child
May you never walk
When the road waits, famished

Traveller, you must set forth
At dawn
I promise marvels of the holy hour
Presages as the white cock's flapped
Perverse impalement – as who would dare
The wrathful wings of man's Progression . . .

But such another Wraith! Brother,
Silenced in the startled hug of
Your invention – is this mocked grimace
This closed contortion – I?